# JAI SHARDA MATA

# SANKALP





**SHARDA MATA TRUST**
DURGA NAGAR (BANTALAB)
JAMMU (J&K) - INDIA

# JAI SHARDA MATA



शक्तिचाप शरघण्टिका, सुधापात्र
रत्नकलशल्लसत्कराम् ।
पूर्णचन्द्रवदनां त्रिलोचनां, शारदां नमत् सर्वसिद्धिदाम् ।।

I bow before Sharda, bestower of all siddies, whose face is aglow like full moon and who has three eyes and six hands bearing 'Shakti', bow, arrow, bell, bowl containing elixir of life and a 'Ratnakalash'.

श्री श्रीशैलस्थिता या प्रहसित्तवदना पार्वती शूलहस्ता ।
वह्नि सूर्येन्दुनेत्रा त्रिभुवनजननी षड्भुजा सर्वशक्तिः ।।
शाण्डिल्येनोपनीता जयति भगवती
भक्तिगम्या ननाताम् ।
सा नः सिहासनस्थां ह्यभिमतफलदा शारदा
शं करोतु ।।

Adoring Shri Shaila, Shri Parvati has trident in her hand; the Sun, the Moon and the Fire are her three eyes, her face aglow with sweet smile. She is the mother of the Universe--all pervading, having six hands. She gave Yugnopavit to Shandalaya, bestows success to all those devotees who bow before HER. May Maa Sharda Seated on a celestial throne, giver of boons, grant me peace.

Kalhana, the great historian of Kashmir has mentioned in Rajtarangni that there is hardly any place in Kashmir without a TIRTHA. Many holy shrines and sacred SHAKTI-STHALS (Devi Bals in Kashmiri Language) exist throughout the valley. Holy Vitasta flowing across it has been praised in Vedas as compassion of Jagdamba representing the most beneficient form of Parvati, the consort of Lord Shiva. That is why Lord Krishna called Kashmir as Mother Parvati. We find many towns and villages named after Mother Bhawani there. It is because of this that the whole of the valley of Kashmir is called Sharda Peeth. From ancient times, large number of pilgrims are attracted to this part for worship and meditation.

Although since antiquity Kashmir was the abode of Sharda, it was Rishi Shandalya, who invoked Her in a form as a presiding Deity at a particular place known to this day as Sharda Peeth. This is clear from the following Shloka of Sharda Sahasranama.

भगवन या महादेवी शारदाख्या सरस्वती ।
काश्मीरस्यां स्वतपसा शाण्डिल्येनावतारिता ॥

(Rishi Shandlya did tapasya and meditation to please Sharda Devi before he got darshan of Bhagwati Sharda)

Shandalya was a siant, born in a shudra family in South India. His Samskars of previous lives created cravings in him for Yugno-pavit samskar. But due to rigidity in caste-system developed by then, No Brahmin obliged him However, seeing his urge, spiritual and intellectual development, some Brahimns of South directed him to go to Kashi and Uttarakhand, where someone might be merciful and allow him to perform upnayan sanskar. In Kashi, he was directed to go to Kashmir, where a Brahmin of Vijeshwara will be able to fulfil his ardent desire. Wandering from pillar to post, Shandalya reached Vijayawada (modern Bijbehara). As destined he

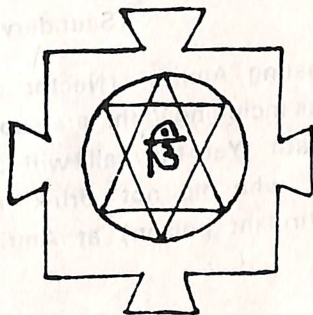
met the Adishthata (Head Priest) of Vijay Keshava, the presiding Deity of the Vijeshwara temple complex and told him the purpose of his visit. Seeing in Shandalya urge, devotion, sense of sacrifice and ability to strive for achievement of goal, the priest out of compassion accepted him, as his disciple and gave him the Panchakshri Sharda Mantra. He further advised him to go to the jungles of Kamraj (North Kashmir), to observe penance and to exercise austerity, while meditating on Sharda. Prompted by the Divine call and advised by the priest, **Muni Shandalya** moved northwards in search of manifestation of Goddess Sharda—ultimate source of Brahm Vidhya. Wandering from jungle to jungle as an ascetic--hermit, he reached the upper Krishenganga valley in the north of Kashmir. There at a place named **Saradavana**, the Goddess Sharda revealed Herself in all her divine grandeur to Shandalya and asked him to demand for a boon as she was pleased with his tapasya. Shandalya had only one desire i.e to have Yugnopavit sanskar. Mother Sharda blessed him with this and asked for one more boon. Shandalya, who had burnt all worldly desires during his 'Sadhna', wanted the Goddess Sharda to stay at the same place in the same form for the benefit of devotees. Meanwhile, the Guru of Shandalya, the head priest of Vijay Keshava had a vision and in a dream he was ordered to proceed to Karnah with other Brahmins for performing Yugnopavit sanskar of Shandalya. This was the first pilgrimage to Sharda at Karnah which became famous as **Sidh Peetha** profused with presence of Shakti.

The saint Shandalya, with Maa Sharda's blessings became great Rishi & gotra Pravartak. He composed many hymns and wrote stotras on Sharda Devi, such as Sharda Satotra, Sharda Saharsanam, Sharda Panchang, and Sharda Patal.

The sacred spot where the Goddess appeared in her divine form is marked by a stone slab seven feet long, six feet wide and half a foot thick. The stone is supposed to cover a Kunda or spring

cavity from where the Goddess rose and finally vanished in. The slab has ipso-facto become the sanctum sanitorium of the temple which came up here on the model of the Aryan order of Kashmir architecture. The Sharda Shrine is hexa-angular in shape as Deity is described with six-fold eternal qualities viz omniscience, completeness, conciousness, free all powerful and boundless. Though in ruins now, the entire complex inspires a sense of grandeur and awe. All that one can now see inside the temple are a seat round and smooth, hewn out of rock, a Sri Chakra and a few other figures

The seat of learning, associated with Sharda Peeth, obviously, is symbolic and not one of materialistic grandeur. It is seen as a kind of stone slab held sacred and in reverence. By now, the most authentic form of Sharda is, given, in the following configuration :



(Linear description of the Diety)

The holy spot where Goddess Sharda manisfested in her divine form for Shandalya became a sacred Shrine to which thousands of devotees not only from the Kashmir valley but from distant parts of India were attracted to seek Mother's blessings.

At this celestial Sharda Temple in Keran, Adi Shankaracharya ascended the Sarvajana Peeth (the throne of omniscience). He called it as **Sarvagya Peetha** i e after the pilgrimage of this shrine one does not need anything further to know, as he becomes

Sarvagya or knowledge personified. He was so moved by the grandeur and greatness of Sharda that on his return back to South henamed two of his Peethas after Sharda;

i) Dwarka Sharda Peeth, and

ii) Sharadamba Peeth Shringeri.

Besides he turned towards Shakticult from purely Vedantic philosphy of monotheism He composed **Saundarya Lahiri** and Saraswati Satotra. He writes :

सुधामप्य आस्वाद्य प्रतिभय जरामृत्यु हरिणीं ।
विपद्यन्ते विश्वे विधिशतमखाद्या दिविषदः ।।
करालं यत् क्ष्वेलं कवलितवतः कालकलना ।
न शंभोस्तन्मूलं तव जननि ताटङ्क महिमा ।।

(Saundarya Lahari Shaloka 28)

By virtue of tasting Amrita (Nector of life) after Amrit Manthan, all the Devas including Vidhi are supposed to be immune from old age and death. Yet they all will perish at the time of Mahapralaya. Shambu, who did not drink nector, but instead, swallowed Halahal (Virulant poison) at Amrit Manthan, will live even at Mahapralaya.

O ! Mother this verily is the piculiar virtue of the tatanka (Dejharu) which you wear as the consort of Lord Shambu.

(Saundarya Lahari Shaloka 28 by Shankrachary-a depiction of Kashmir culture.)

शुकला ब्रह्मविचारसार परमाद्यां जगद्व्यापिनीम् ।
वीणापुस्तकधारिणीम भयदां जाड्यान्धकारापहाम् ।।
हस्ते स्फाटिकमालकिां विदधतीं पद्मासने संस्थिताम् ।
वन्दे तां परमेश्वरीं भगवतीं बुद्धिपदां शारदाम् ।।

(Sarawati Satotra)